

Batticaloa, February, 5th

Commemoration 6 months after Muttur massacre

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

6 months ago, not very far from here, in ACF Muttur base, 17 humanitarian aid workers were shot dead.

We are here, and I thank you for being present, because we have not forgotten and we will never forget this crime. Many of you knew them but months after months and particularly in the humanitarian community, people change, move... That's another important reason to continue to gather us times to times to not forget and to tell to new people what's happened in Muttur and keep in mind and heart the memory of our 17 colleagues. In this context, I thank you very much to be present. It's important and necessary for us and for the families to feel this support from Sri lankan and international and national humanitarian community.

This crime is without precedent in the humanitarian history. This terrible and brutal event is worrying for the entire humanitarian world. When aid workers are targeted, each human being is affected. ACF would like to conduct a wide reflection in order to increase juridical protection of humanitarian aid workers whoever and wherever they are in the world.

6 months later, the investigation process is going on and we hope this will lead to a credible track to identify the culprits.

Furthermore, we are justified in thinking that the Presidential Commission of Inquiry composed of national experts and international neutral observers will enlighten the outcome of the investigation of 15 cases of huge violation of human rights, included the Muttur case.

- 3 months ago, we were together in Colombo to commemorate the memory of our 17 colleagues. I specially would like to thank OCHA for his welcoming. We are pleased the sri lankan authorities are present today and share this moment with us. Today, ACF resumes its activities in Batticaloa district when thousands of IDPs are gathering around in this area. This is a symbolic place for us because Batticaloa stands for being one of the first places of the ACF intervention in 1998. When the humanitarian needs are increasing ACF mission is to help vulnerable people.

Today, we are all together to commemorate our 17 ACF colleagues who lost their lives while helping the population at risk. We repeat our sincere condolences to the families. Our hearts go out to them.

I would like to remind you the names of the friends we lost to be sure that no one of them will be forgotten.

Muralitharan
Arulrajah
Pratheeban
Jaseelan
Kavitha
Kovarthani
Abdul Latiff Mohammed Jawffar
Ganesh
Kokilavathani
Romila
Narmathan
Ketheswaran
Rishikesan
Koneswaran
Anantharajah
Sritharan
Kodeeswaran

Especially today, we remind them for their humanitarian commitment. We deeply miss them.

Francois Danel
Action contre la Faim Executive Director